

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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R 081831Z AUG 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6845
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 22990

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINS ET SO UR
SUBJECT: THE HORN AS SEEN BY FORMER ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON
AUGUST 8, FORMER ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE
WODAJI, ENTHUSIASTICALLY BACKED BY EX-MINISTER GEDAMU
TESFARE, SAID THAT THE WEST IS MAKING A GREAT ERROR BY
ASSUMING THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SETTLE
THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA. HE
DESCRIBED MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM AS INTELLIGENT AND
CLEVER, BUT COMPLETELY OPPORTUNISTIC AND WITHOUT
ROOTS IN ANY PART OF ETHIOPIA. THIS CONDITION FORCES
HIM TO USE TERROR TO MAINTAIN THE LEADERSHIP HE
ATTAINED LARGELY BY POLITICAL DEFAULT. MENGISTU'S
PREOCCUPATION IS REMAINING IN POWER, KIFLE ASSERTED,
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AND HE LACKS EVEN A MODICUM OF ETHIOPIAN NATIONALISM.
THUS KIFLE THOUGHT THAT MENGISTU, IF HE FINDS IT
NECESSARY TO HAVE SOVIET SUPPORT TO STAY IN POWER,
WOULD YIELD TO GROWING SOVIET PRESSURE, EXERCISED
THROUGH THE INTERMEDIARY OF AGENTS WITHIN THE
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, TO GIVE UP PART OF THE OGADEN.
KIFLE GUESSED THAT RECENT SOMALI CLAIMS TO LARGE AREAS

OUTSIDE THE OGADEN ARE DESIGNED TO SET THE STAGE FOR A "COMPROMISE" GIVING MOST OF THE OGADEN ITSELF TO SOMALIA.

2. KIFLE CLAIMED THAT ALMOST EVERY EX-ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL WITH WHOM HE HAS TALKED SINCE DEFECTING EARLY THIS YEAR SHARES HIS ANALYSIS THAT CONVENTIONAL WESTERN OPINION TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, THE SOVIETS CAN RESOLVE THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. NOT LEAST OF THE REASONS, HE STRESSED, IS THE NEAR TOTAL DISAPPEARANCE OF ETHIOPIA'S MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ELITES WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BRAKE TO MENGISTU'S EXCESSES. AS IT IS, HE SAID, THE REGIME'S TERROR TACTICS HAVE REDUCED EVERYONE TO SILENT COMPLICITY.

3. COMMENT: KIFLE EXPECTS SHORTLY TO BE GRANTED PROVISIONAL ENTRY TO THE US AS A REFUGEE. EMBOFF HAS KNOWN HIM FOR YEARS AND BELIEVES THAT AFTER DISCOUNTING THE AXES FIFLE HAS TO GRIND, HIS VIEWS ON THIS OCCASION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SINCERE. IN OTHER WORDS, KIFLE IS CONVINCED THAT IN ORDER TO HOLD POWER, MENGISTU IS CAPABLE OF PRESIDING OVER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EMPIRE, INCLUDING THE LOSS OF BOTH ERITREA AND OGADEN.

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